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To these we might add many similar testimonies. But to come a little farther down, to the time of St. Chrysostom, we find him speaking slightly of confession to men, and urging continual confession to God only. Out of many passages our space allows us to give only the following:—"It is not necessary," says he, "that thou shouldst confess in the presence of witnesses; let the inquiry of thy offences be made in thy thought: let this judgment be without a witness; let God only see thee confessing. Therefore, I entreat you, and beseech and pray you, that you would continually make your confession to God. . . . Unclasp thy conscience before God, and show thy words unto him, and of him ask a medicine: for although thou hold thy peace, he knoweth all. I do not say to thee bring thyself on the stage, nor accuse thyself to others; but I command thee to obey the prophet, saying—reveal thy ways unto the Lord—confess them before God, confess thy sins before the judge, praying, if not with the tongue, at least with thy memory, and so look to obtain mercy. But thou art ashamed to say that thou hast sinned. Confess thy faults, then, daily in thy prayers. For, do I say, confess them to thy fellow-servant, who may reproach thee therewith? Confess them to God, who healeth them."* In our last number, page 39, we cited St. Augustine to the same effect; and need we go further to show that whatever differences may exist in the writings of the early Fathers as to the advantages of seeking the aid of the discreet spiritual physician for advice and consolation (and St. Augustine himself, doubtless, in another passage,† urges on notorious offenders, whose crimes had bred open scandal, that private confession to God was not sufficient, but that they should also make public acknowledgment, and apply to the power of the Church, publicly, for reconciliation); yet none of them ever conceived that secret confession of every sin to a priest was an indispensable condition of salvation, or that it was invariably understood so to be by the whole Church from the days of our Lord and his Apostles, as asserted by the Council of Trent.

We have much more to say illustrative of the historical view of this important subject; but we fear we have already run the risk of wearying such of our readers as may not feel as intense interest in this matter as we do ourselves. We must, for the present, therefore, conclude this short historical sketch by giving a brief account of the abolition of the office of public Penitentiary, in the latter end of the fourth century, by Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, the immediate predecessor of St. Chrysostom, referred to in the letter of a "Northern Reader," inserted in our last number.

If there be any passage in ancient ecclesiastical history which seems to promise a satisfactory elucidation of the antiquity of the confessional, and a test by which to try whether it existed, in its present form, in the primitive Church, in a constant and uninterrupted succession, as alleged by the Council of Trent, it is this. And the story, on the joint testimony of the two ecclesiastical historians, Socrates and Sozomen, is as follows:—

"In the time of Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, there was, it seems, a custom in that Church (as also in most others), that one of the Presbyters, of greatest piety, wisdom, and gravity, should be chosen Penitentiary—that is, be appointed to the peculiar office of receiving confession, and assisting and directing penitents in the management of their penitence. Now, it happened that a certain woman of quality, stricken with remorse of conscience, comes to the penitentiary (that then was), and, according to custom, makes a particular confession of all such sins as she was conscious to herself to have committed since her baptism; for which he, according to his office, appointed her the penance of fasting and continual prayers, to expiate her guilt, and give proof of the truth of her repentance. But she, proceeding on very particularly in her confessions, at last, amongst other things, comes to declare that a certain deacon of that Church had defiled her; upon notice of which horrid fact (secrecy not being, we conclude, then enjoined in confessions), the deacon was (very properly) cashiered, and cast out of the Church; and the matter coming to the ears of the people, they presently fell into a mighty commotion and rage about it, partly in detestation of so foul an action of the deacon, but principally on account of the dishonour and scandal that reflected on the whole Church. The Bishop, Nectarius, finding the honour of the whole body of his clergy extremely concerned in this accident, and being very anxious both to extinguish the present flame and to prevent like occasions in future, resolved, by the advice of one Eudæmon, a presbyter of that Church, to abolish the office of penitentiary altogether; and now, says the historian, by this means every man is left to the conduct of his own conscience, and permitted to partake of the holy mysteries at his own peril."‡

This, we think, plainly shows that the office was not then considered a divine or apostolic constitution, but one created, as well as thus abolished, upon merely prudential considerations, as a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, and involving no sacramental considerations whatever. Sozomen adds, that the example of Nectarius was followed by almost all the bishops and Churches in the world; and Socrates, who was the first and principal relator of the whole story, states that he was personally acquainted with this

presbyter, Eudæmon, on whose advice Nectarius acted, in making this change in the discipline of the Church; and that he had the said relation of it from his own mouth, and expostulated with him about it, thinking that the state of piety would be much endangered by this change, and, in plain words, tells him that he had thereby bereft men of assistance in the conduct of their consciences, and hindered the great benefit men have, or might have, one of another, by private advice and correction.

We think this matter throws great light on the history of auricular confession, and disproves any such suggestion as has been sometimes made, without any good reason, that it was only public confession, and not private, which was, on this occasion, so generally laid aside; for, (not to go at present into many other coercive reasons to the same effect), we would ask, how could the abolition of one public functionary have bereft men of assistance in the conduct of their consciences, or left each of them to partake of the holy mysteries—i.e., the Holy Eucharist—at his own peril, if each was still bound, at that very time, sacramentally to confess and be absolved by a priest, as laid down by Pope Innocent III., in the Council of Lateran, A.D. 1215, and afterwards by the Council of Trent, A.D. 1551, in the canons, printed in full in our last number? see page 38.

We conclude that it is not true that the Catholic Church has always observed, from the time of our Lord and his apostles, the practice of confessing all sins secretly to a priest alone.

Whether the practice can be maintained by the authority of those texts of Scripture which are sometimes cited by Roman Catholic writers in favour of it, or whether the practice of auricular confession, as now used in the Church of Rome, be favourable or mischievous to practical piety, will form the subject of our future consideration.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. No anonymous letter can be attended to. Whatever is sent for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for his good faith.

We would request our valued correspondents, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, to limit the length of their communications, and not to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, MAY, 1853.

THE continuance and success of our paper, for nearly a year and a half, and the acceptance it has met with, both from Protestants and Roman Catholics, has proved some things that are worthy to be proved.

We conceived that it was possible, and that it was a Christian duty, too, that they who differ about religious truth should try whether a calm and Christian consideration of each other's arguments and opinions might not bring them nearer to an agreement in the truth. We were persuaded that a careful avoidance of all angry expressions, and a steady perseverance in kindly feelings, would change the common character of religious controversy. We did not expect that it would bring all to agree in the same opinion at once; but we did hope that, in a very brief time, it would prove that it is possible for those who sincerely differ, to discuss and examine those differences in a spirit of Christian love, and with a real desire to ascertain what the truth is, for themselves and others.

We were well aware that, in a time of great excitement about religion, when so many on each side are earnestly endeavouring to win over others to their side, such an attempt was peculiarly difficult; but then we saw, that for that very reason it was peculiarly necessary. All experience shows that man's passions are never so violent as when they are inflamed about religion. The greatest cruelties, the most terrible persecutions, and the most bitter hatreds that

the world has ever seen, have arisen from this cause.

Seeing, then, that extensive discussion and controversy was inevitable—that it was impossible to stop it, even if it were right to do so—we resolved to try if it were possible that discussion among Christians could be conducted in a Christian manner.

And though the task be difficult, we never doubted that it was possible; for this reason—it is a duty, and duties are always possible.

Neither were we without encouragement. Are we not all fellow-countrymen? Have we not a common country, suffering under heavy visitations, and needing our united efforts for her welfare? Can we unite for her good with hatred between us? Is it not our common interest to love each other? and should not even our differences be governed by love and not by hatred? Have not all the same heaven and the same hell set before us? Can we be indifferent to which of them ourselves and our neighbours are going? and will not a loving and a gentle treatment of each other's errors be the most hopeful method of advancing the progress, both of ourselves and others, towards the God of love?

These reflections had led us to a settled resolution, that in this journal, which we proposed to establish for religious discussion, we would labour to exclude every angry word, every thought of hatred, every approach of passion; that we would allow those only to write in our pages who love their neighbours souls, and who treat them in a spirit of love.

We trust it is in no spirit of idle boasting, but in a spirit of thankfulness, that we now ask our readers to consider how we have carried out our design. If any one of our readers can show us where we have offended them, or where our spirit needs to be corrected, we shall thankfully accept it at their hands.

We have ourselves, of course, more opportunity of learning the general effect already produced, than individual readers can often have. We receive numerous communications from Protestants, expressing their approbation of the spirit in which we write, and of our care to avoid offending their opponents. This seems to be our chief merit in the eyes of our Protestant friends. We also receive numerous communications from Roman Catholics, in various ways, expressing their satisfaction at the kindness and the fairness of our conduct. On both sides we find that our readers approve of the manner of religious discussion which it has been our object to promote. The existence of our paper for so long a time, and its present prosperous position, affords proof of this; for we could not continue to publish if we did not get extensive support, and acceptance and encouragement from both sides. And we find that we are daily advancing in public favour, which is conclusive that the public are pleased with discussion free from anger and strife.

Now, we ask our readers, on both sides, to consider the importance of this. If, through our means, the two great parties should come to regard each other rather as persons to be convinced with patience and meekness, than provoked by abuse and insult; if, by our means, they should come to understand that these feelings are mutual; if, by our means, they should come to understand and to view each other in this light, shall we not have done much for the peace and happiness of our common country, as well as for the promotion of Christian charity and Christian truth?

We invite the attention of all our contributors, and all our correspondents, and of all readers, too, to the importance of this object; and we ask the assistance of each of them in their several stations, in promoting it.

We are aware that this happy result is in pro-

* Chrysost. Hom. de penitent. et Confessione. tom. 5, Edit. Lat. Col. 501. Edit. Basil. 1558. Opera. tom. 12, p. 289.
† Augustin. Serm. 392. tom. 5, p. 184.
‡ Socrates, lib. 5, c. 19. Sozomen, lib. 7, c. 16.

gress in a multitude of instances, and it is our most earnest desire to labour diligently to promote it, and to obtain the co-operation of all who have it at heart like ourselves.

Our attention has been called to a letter in the *Freeman's Journal*, from the Rev. R. C. Kelsh, who appears to be a Roman Catholic clergyman, in the diocese of Meath. Part of the letter is as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—will you allow me the favour of complaining through your paper, of a gross outrage practised of late on my Catholic friends in this neighbourhood, in the repeated transmission to them through the Post-office, of publications highly offensive to their religious feelings. I need scarcely say, that I allude particularly to the CATHOLIC LAYMAN. It is idle for these mistaken men to imagine that they will gain converts to their cause, from our intellectual, upright, and religious people, by their foul, filthy effusions."

Mr. Kelsh also accuses us of "unnecessary insult!" We think our readers will scarcely sympathize either with Mr. KELSH's epithets or irritation.

If Mr. Kelsh would write to ourselves, and explain to us what "outrage" we have committed, or what "insult" we have offered, or wherein we have been "filthy," he would do us a kindness.

If we have, in any point, mistaken the doctrine of the Church of Rome, our pages are at Mr. Kelsh's service to correct our mistake. If we have advanced arguments that can be shown to be unsound, our pages are at his service to show it. We tell him that our paper is read by a vast number of Roman Catholics. If he thinks they have been set wrong by what they read in our pages, we offer him the same opportunity of setting them right; would not this be the most likely way of accomplishing the object?

Correspondence.

ON PURGATORY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Before I undertake the discussion of any other subject, permit me to offer a few words in reply to your remarks on the second part of my letter, published in the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, of December, 1852. The only point to which I wish to direct attention, is the extract from Origen, which I quoted in support of the doctrine of purgatory, and which, in my opinion, has not been, in the slightest degree, rendered nugatory by the fact, that some of the writings of this great man have been justly condemned by the Church. I am not aware that the homily from which I quoted has ever been condemned by any Council, Pope, or other legitimate authority, and when I shall have been informed that such has been the case, I will most willingly give up Origen; but till I shall be furnished with this information, I will hold the doctrine set forth in the extract, as the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the third century; particularly, as I find this same doctrine unequivocally set forth and supported by the concurrent testimony of other distinguished Fathers, who, if not contemporary, were immediately subsequent to Origen.

St. Epiphanius, who wrote about the year 368, expresses his admiration of the rite which directs the names of the dead to be mentioned in our prayers, and says—"the prayers which are offered for the dead, are profitable to them, though they may not blot out all their sins." Again, he says—"We make mention, both of the saints and of sinners; of sinners that we may supplicate God for mercy on them, but of the saints, both Fathers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, &c., that we may honour the Lord Jesus Christ in a particular manner."—Epiphanius, *Her.* 75, sec. 7, T. i., page 911.

He further maintains, in sec. 8, page 912, "that the Church has this doctrine traditionally from Christ."

St. Augustine, who was ordained priest, in 390, inculcates the same doctrine. He first proves from (Matt. xii. 32), that some sins may be forgiven in the world to come, for, "otherwise," says he, "it would not have been truly said of some, that their sins would neither be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come, unless some sins, though not remitted in this world, were remitted in the world to come"—Aug. *Lib.* 21, de *Civit Dei*, cap. 24.

He next says—"When sacrifices of the altar, or alms, are offered for all the faithful departed, for the truly good they are acts of thanksgiving; for those not very bad, they are propitiations; for those very bad, although

they afford no helps to the dead, they are, in some sort, a consolation to the living. But to those to whom they are profitable, they are either a full remission, or by them their punishment is rendered more tolerable"—*Enchiridion*, cap. 109, 110.

I might produce many other respectable witnesses from the fourth century, but the two I have produced are, I think, beyond exception; and from the quotations I have given, it is manifest, first, that the ancients did mention the saints, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, martyrs, &c., not to pray for them, as if they thought they needed their prayers, but to give honour to Christ, whose saints, &c., they are. Secondly, that they mentioned all those departed in the Christian and Catholic faith, entreating God to have mercy on them, through the saints, &c., whom they named along with them: and hence it is plain they offered these prayers, believing in a middle state of purgation or suffering of the souls of penitent Christians. "This tradition of the Fathers the universal church observes," says St. Augustine, *Serm.* 172, de *Verb. apos.* sec. 2.

In these discussions I cannot be persuaded that any party can claim an exclusive privilege, excepting so far as he may be entitled to such, either by the validity of his arguments, or the character of his testimonies; nor do I imagine, from my connection with your paper, that such would be attempted. Upon this principle then, I claim the right of quoting, in support of my views, from Origen's comment on Jeremiah, a right too which I consider I am as fully entitled, as you could be, when you quoted from the same comment, in page 110, col. 3, October, 1852.

I remain, Sir, yours sincerely,

EDMOND POWER.

Mullinavat, April 4th, 1853.

The first thing we have here to do is to defend ourselves from the charge of inconsistency in quoting Origen ourselves, and yet rejecting his authority when he was brought forward as a witness by Mr. Power; and our defence consists in a simple explanation of the principles on which we appeal to the testimony of the Fathers. We do not believe that we are bound to assent to everything that is contained in any work of an ancient Father, even though that work be not condemned by any Pope or Council. When we quote Origen we do so merely to ascertain what were the sentiments of Origen on such a subject; but, then, there is a further question—Were the sentiments of Origen approved of by the Catholic Church of his day—that is to say, by the majority of Christians of his time? And, again, there is an appeal from their doctrine to that of their predecessors, and, above all, to the statements of our Lord himself and of his apostles. We did quote Origen's testimony to the sufficiency of Scripture; but, then, we gave quotations enough from other Fathers to show that this, at least, was not one of Origen's heresies; and we do not think Mr. Power will say that this is a subject on which Origen's views were ever held heretical. We objected to Origen's testimony in favour of Purgatory—not on account of erroneous views of his on irrelevant subjects, but because it was on this very subject of the state of the soul after death that Origen was decidedly and particularly heretical, and because the passage quoted by Mr. Power is acknowledged, by learned Roman Catholics, to be one embodying Origen's heretical views. In fact, Origen believed that all future torments were only purgatorial and temporary; and, in the excess of his charity, he supposed that even the devil himself, after a sufficient amount of suffering, would be purified enough to resume his place among the angels of God. It is easy, then, to produce passages, in which Origen speaks of the sufferings to be endured by sinners after death as temporary; but it will be seen that this is very different from the Roman Catholic doctrine of a Purgatory where torments are endured by the souls of the justified after their departure from this world.

In proof of our assertion, that the passage quoted by Mr. Power from Origen is heretical, we need only refer to the note of the Benedictine editors on the passage—viz., "Not only in this place, but in a multitude of others, Origen establishes a Purgatory; but in his own way—that is to say, that no other fire or punishments torture souls but those that are Purgatorial or temporary."—Vol. iii., p. 232. We suppose we shall not be asked for formal proof that this doctrine is heretical, but the reader who requires the authority of Popes and Councils will bear in mind that Origen was condemned by the Synods of Alexandria and of Cyprus, by Pope Anastasius, and by the fifth General Council held at Constantinople in the Pontificate of Pope Vigilius.

And as to what the Fathers taught, as to this particular doctrine of the purifying influence of the torments of another world, will best appear from the evidence of Epiphanius and Augustine, which we select from that of other Fathers, that it may be seen how Mr. Power's three witnesses agree with each other.

St. Augustine says (*Lib. de Heres.* c. xliii.—Ed. Bened. t. viii., p. 10)—"What Catholic Christian, learned or unlearned, does not vehemently abhor that Purgatory of sins which Origen speaks of—namely, the doctrine that those who have finished this life in scandalous crimes, and sacrileges, and impieties, the

greatest possible—nay, that the devil himself and his angels shall, after a very long time indeed, be purged and liberated, and restored to the kingdom of God and to light. . . . Concerning which vain impiety I have disputed diligently in the books on the city of God, against the philosophers from whom Origen learned these notions."

What Epiphanius thought of Origen may be learned from his second book on heresies, where the 64th section (a very long one) is devoted to an examination of some of the errors of Origen, and where such epithets are applied to him and his doctrines that we can guess how the good father would have shuddered could he have known in what company he would be placed by Mr. Power. At present we refer to Epiphanius's letter to John, bishop of Jerusalem* (works, vol. ii., p. 314, Paris, 1622) in which, after calling Origen the father of Arius, and the root of other heresies, he goes on—"And this, too, which he maintains, I know not whether to grieve or laugh at; for this excellent teacher, Origen, dares to teach that the Devil will again be what he was once, and will return to the same dignity, and will ascend the kingdom of heaven. O shocking! Who can be so senseless and so foolish as to believe that John the Baptist, and Peter, and John the Apostle, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets shall be co-heirs with the Devil in the kingdom of God?"

We think we have said enough to show that Origen's notions on the subject of Purgatorial torment cannot be safely followed. And we might now reasonably refuse to go further; for it will be remembered that our controversy with W. C. Search and Mr. Power, arose out of a discussion of the question, Did the Fathers of the first three centuries know anything about Purgatory? When every attempt has failed to produce a mention of Purgatory from any orthodox writer of the first three centuries, we may be satisfied that the doctrine of Purgatory was not received by tradition from the Apostles. It becomes, then, a matter of mere historical curiosity whether the belief in it arose in the Church in the fourth or in some succeeding century. We are content, however, to enter into this discussion as far as it relates to the fourth century, and shall prove that Purgatory was no part of the doctrine of the Church in that age. In particular we shall prove that St. Epiphanius and St. Augustine counted no such belief among their articles of faith, and we shall prove it from the very passages to which Mr. Power has referred. We have so much to say on this subject that we shall make the sentiments of St. Epiphanius and St. Augustine, about Purgatory, the subject of a separate article in our next number.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

WE resume our examination of the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome, in reply to the letter of "J.B.," in our March number.

We beg to remind our readers that a sacrament can only be instituted by appointing and commanding the form and matter of the sacrament. The question whether Christ instituted a sacrament is, therefore, in fact only a question whether Christ appointed the form and matter of it—that is, the words to be said and the thing to be used.

CONFIRMATION.

Our correspondent mentions Matt. xix. 13-15, as being applied by individual Roman Catholics to prove that the sacrament of confirmation, as now held by the Church of Rome, was instituted by Christ. Those words are—"Then were little children presented to him, that he should impose hands on them and pray, and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come to me, for the kingdom of heaven is for such. And when he imposed hands on them, he departed from them." Our correspondent adds, "see also Acts viii. 14, 15, 16, and 17."

What, then, is the "form and matter" of the sacrament of confirmation, as now held in the Church of Rome? And do these passages of Scripture prove that Christ instituted that form and matter?

What, then, is the "matter" of the modern Roman sacrament of confirmation? The Catechism of the Council of Trent answers, "The matter of confirmation is chrism" (that is, a kind of ointment, made of olive oil and balsam). Without this "matter" the Roman sacrament cannot exist at all. Now, is there any proof, in the passages above referred to, that Christ or his apostles ever used chrism? Clearly not; and, therefore, there is no proof that Christ or his apostles ever made the sacrament at all. Protestants believe that the laying on of hands is an apostolic institution; but the Church of Rome says that it is no sacrament without the use of chrism. Is not the question about the sacrament of confirmation a question whether Christ appointed chrism? and where is the proof that he did?

This "form" of the sacrament of confirmation is stated, by the same Catechism of the Council of Trent, to consist in these words—"I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of sal-

* As we have had occasion to quote this letter, it may interest our readers to know some of the circumstances which gave occasion to it. We add them in a separate article (see page 509), not wishing to mix up two subjects in the same article.